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THE MODERN HOUSE—ITS DECORATION AND FURNITURE—VII.

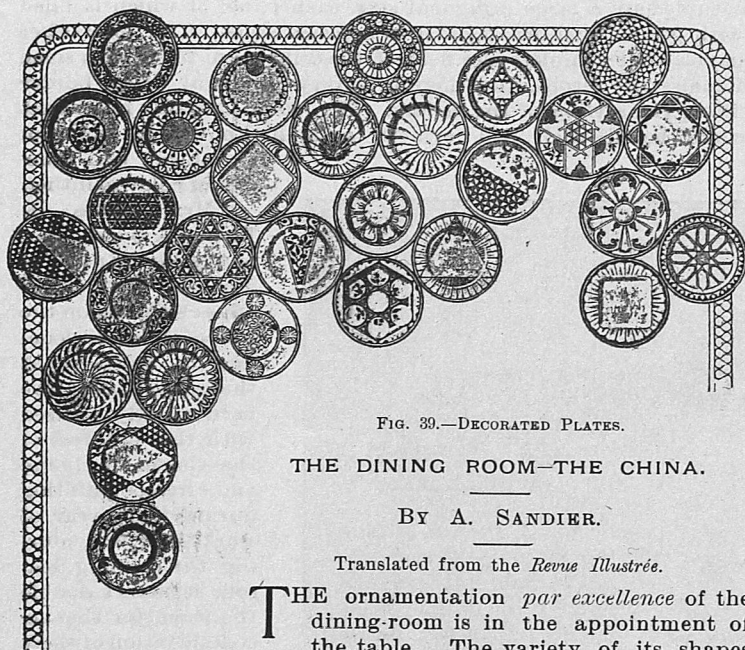


FIG. 39.—DECORATED PLATES.

THE DINING ROOM—THE CHINA.

BY A. SANDIER.

Translated from the *Revue Illustrée*.

THE ornamentation *par excellence* of the dining-room is in the appointment of the table. The variety of its shapes

and the beauty of its coloring gives to the chinaware the first importance as a decorative feature of this portion of the room.

Plain dishes haven't retained their place save in the hotels and palaces where the state dinner still reigns in all its ceremony, we had almost said in all its stiffness. The princes of finance and the princes without qualifying phrase still decorate their sideboards with vessels of silver and silver gilt, historical heirlooms which, like old manuscripts and parchments, give tone to the house, and *capitatio benevolente* indicate the host to be a man of consequence. Notwithstanding this in their service, china has replaced metal excepting in the epergnes, the chafing dishes and the flower vases.

It is true that pottery does not have the sumptuous character, the scintillations, the ever-varying reflections of light of vessels made from the precious metals which, on the rare occasions on which they still appear at a banquet, create an impression of magnificence and authority. But what renders pottery particularly desirable to moderns is the great latitude which it allows for the individual taste and fancy, to the play of colors and caprices of ornamentation, and which is impossible in an article where decorative effect is due solely to the brilliancy and value of the material from which it is made. It might be as well to observe, by the way, to amateurs in plain china and silver that a little of the uniformity and lack of individuality of silver and gilt service have been happily corrected, partly by frosting and blending the colors of the gold and silver which gives a rich variety of parti-colored ornamentation, and partly

by the addition of bands of enamel in bright colors which harmonize naturally with the metallic tones. Russian silversmiths have made and continue to make the most beautiful articles in this fashion. Among the beautiful presents offered to the Tsar Alexander III, in 1882, on his coronation, were a series of silver or silver gilt plates with borders of cloisonné enamel with Byzantine ornamentation in the richest colors. We are convinced that our silversmiths could do much in this line, and that the result would be a great improvement in the character of our dishes. It seems scarcely possible to imagine anything more original or brilliant than a dish made of precious metal framed in enamel, reproducing creeping plants and the feathers of birds either in their natural effects or somewhat conventionalized. A most striking decoration of the feasts in former days was the *paon revêtu*, that is the peacock served with his aigrette and his plumage. In our own day the pheasant also appears on the festive board. The colors of these birds, which are the same as those of the cock, not so rare but none the less magnificent, and their tails and wings, when properly disposed, form excellent subjects to reproduce in enamel, are but little used, though naturally appropriate for the decoration of a dinner service.

These latter subjects are equally well adapted for use in decorating china with a few necessary changes. We give further on the design and description of a porcelain or faience service, the large pieces of which were made in the style indicated with a specimen of the new figures, and also with geometric designs upon the smaller dishes and plates.

Ceramic art has undoubtedly made much progress in our day. The new shapes and the new decorations of the Sevres ware compared with that of former years speak for themselves

and show the truth of this statement. The art of the curves and profiles, rational and harmonious to the eye, the character of the ornamentation and of the decorative subjects in painting or enamel, in relief, or flat, testify to a revolution or rather an evolution toward a truly artistic taste. The rhythmic suggestion of the curves, the first intuitions of the esthetic appropriateness of the ornamentation are visible throughout in the products of the governmental factories, as well as of those in private hands. Here are produced those labored pictures on the belly of vases, the shapes which suggest a painful association of the bizarre with the useless, of dull dark colors which transform a vase of a white material brilliant and trans-

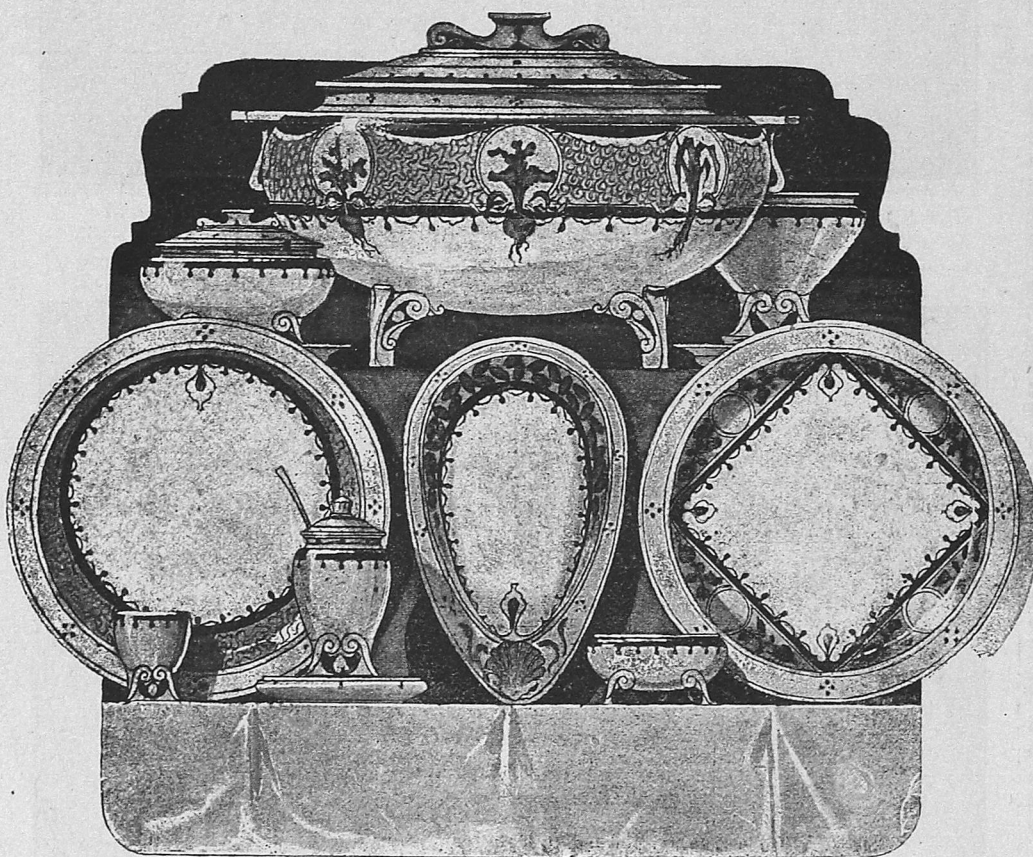


FIG. 40.—SOUP-TUREEN, BUTTER-DISH, SUGAR-BASIN, PLATES, SIDE DISH, EGG-CUP, MUSTARD-POT AND SALT-CELLAR.

lucent by nature into a forced imitation of a vase of lapis lazuli, of red jasper or porphyry.

Sevres ware offers to-day the very models, the outlines of which were designed by Carrier-Belleuse, and with the sides covered with figures modeled by Rodin. Private industry has produced faience of all forms, possibly less classic but always more original. Now let us complete the decoration of the dining-room, placing on the dressers and sideboard several beautiful pieces, and on the table a service from the kilns of Utzschneider or Haviland, conforming to the best models of traditional ceramics, or of the Orientals, or according to a new design arranged jointly by the decorative artist and the amateur who is desirous of having his service made according to his own taste

and bearing his own mark. To produce an original service is an easy task, though this is not thought to be the case by those decorators who always imitate architectural designs and antiquated ornamentation. It is only necessary to go first, and above all to the organic shapes of Nature that surround us, and afterwards to geometry, and through all to follow the lines composing these shapes in all their combinations; not only the straight lines and the spherical curves, but also the composite lines, the spirals and helicoids. We are convinced that but little has been accomplished as yet in this line and that an infinity remains to be done.

Many hundred interlacing combinations could be devised in colored spiral lines. We are able only to make mention of this in passing, and it should form a special chapter in the grammar of ornamental art.

Geometry shows us the different methods of dividing the circular surface of the plate, the principal piece in the service. In the head-piece, Fig. 39, we have collected the first combinations which have presented themselves to our mind. Every one should be able to invent others; their number is illimitable. They may be classified by families, thus:

- (1.) Division by concentric circles.
- (2.) Divisions by radii.
- (3.) Divisions by segments.
- (4.) Divisions by combinations of two or three of the preceding systems.

(5.) Unsymmetrical or irregular divisions, of which Japanese ceramics offer us most charming examples.

Once having selected the divisions which you prefer, nature, imagination or geometry, as explained above, aids one in filling out the frame with an attractive design.

The preceding observations are applicable only to those plates and dishes which have a circular shape given by a turntable. But the endeavors to obtain substantial perfection have led to demands upon the moulder to make innovations in his productions, and circular shapes are no longer imperative and we are able to find innumerable other designs for enclosing the square, the polygon or the shapes admired in nature, as those of leaves, fruits, shells, fish, animals, etc.

Now a considerable range of choice of services can be found from which one's fancy may be suited. Unhappily they are open to the reproach of a kind of monotony which is tiresome and irritating, and is born of uniformity. Generally only one or at most a very small number of decorative motives are adopted which are repeated throughout the entire service. The makers are content with enlarging or diminishing the size of the design, according to the dimensions of the piece. We find these same figures from the soup to the dessert, and they come to be an annoyance instead of a pleasure to the eye, and cause one to regret the plain wares or those decorated with a simple band or Greek border.

According to our ideas the variety in the decoration of the china should be emblematic of its varied uses. Without entirely changing the motif of each plate it is possible, while preserving the same general scheme, to have one decorative effect in the soup service and the *hors d'œuvre*, another for the *entrées*, *relevés*, *rotis* and *légumes*, and finally a third for the dessert. It is after this scheme that we have designed the three illustrations accompanying this chapter. In Fig. 40 we have grouped the oval soup tureen girdled by a band whereon are traced

vermicular ornaments, suggestive of vermicelli, studded with illustrations of vegetables; to the right and the left are the butter and sugar dishes; to the left on the lower part of the dresser the deep dish; beside it the radish and side dishes, on the borders of which we have displayed radishes and olives, and beside the egg dish are placed the mustard and salt stands.

In Fig. 41 we show the large dish for roasts, the shallow dish, the vegetable dish in which the division by segments is employed, in one of which appears a cock, in another a fowl or some piece of game treated in a conventionalized style as shown in the shallow plate, or in a spirited realistic manner as in the platter, or edible plants may furnish the motif for the decoration.

In Fig. 42 is shown a square dessert dish and a fruit dish, the designs of which show still another slightly different form from the preceding. In all these designs we have sought to leave the center untouched, formerly always filled with ornamentation, and we prefer, where possible, to place the decorations on the margin.

To design and produce an original service is a problem which must prove very attractive to an amateur fond of novelty. But there are numerous circumstances which might prevent or retard the realization of this desire; for instance, the possession of a style which one cannot think of sacrificing

the question, on the contrary being as to whether it cannot be completed or filled out with other pieces of the same kind.

One finds, for instance, among the samples of the house of Utzschneider & Co. a selection of porcelain or faience in the

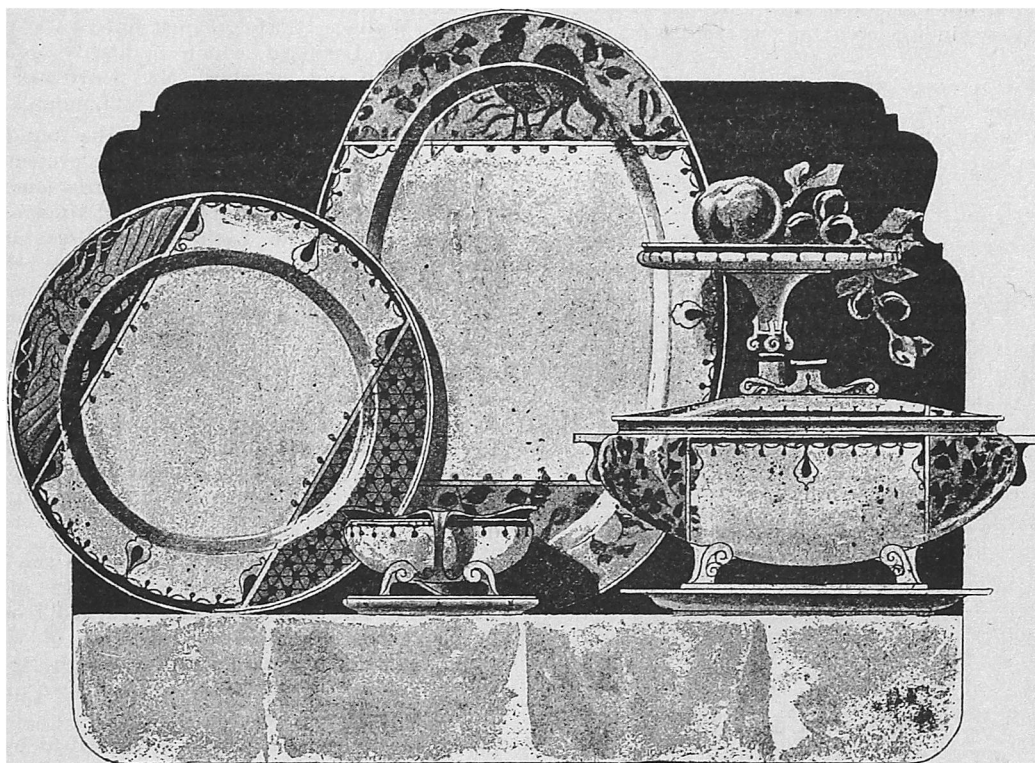


FIG. 41.—LARGE DISH FOR ROASTS, SHALLOW DISH, VEGETABLE DISH, SAUCE-BOAT AND FRUIT DISH.

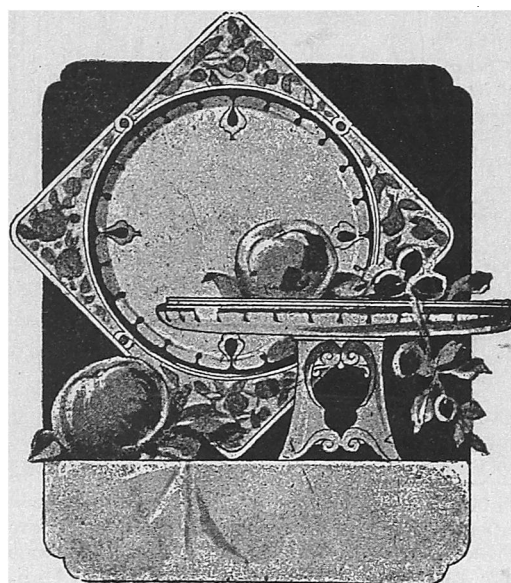


FIG. 42.—DESSERT PLATE AND FRUIT DISH.

styles of Saxony, Lorraine, Strasbourg, old Rouen, and Cluny, made by this celebrated pottery, and recalling the most happy inventions and the most harmonious coloring of the magnificent

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

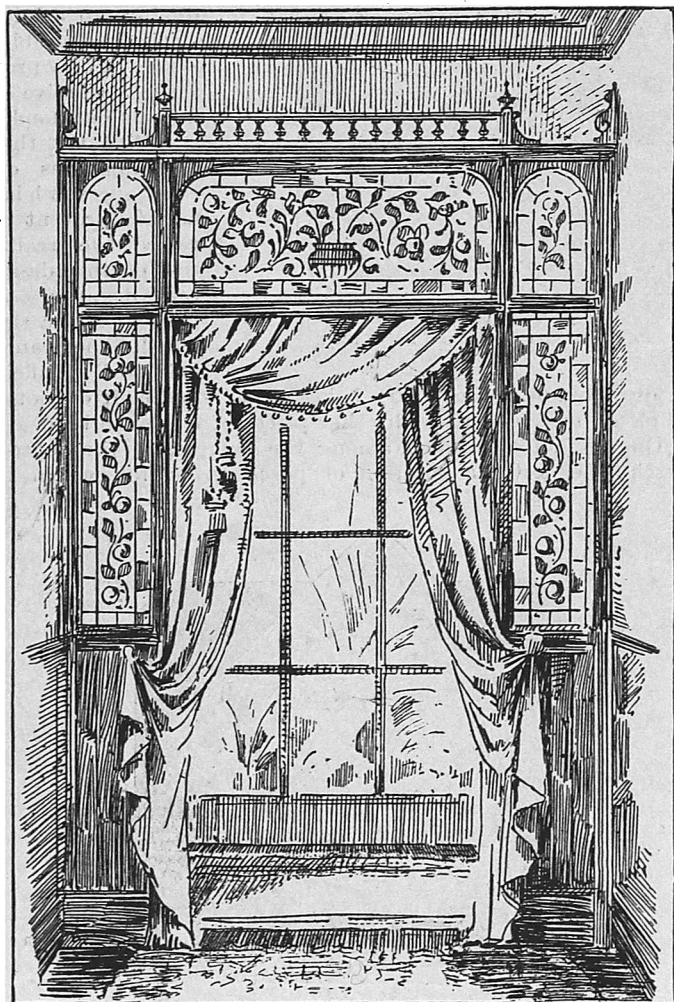
classic ceramics, and with a fineness of grain brought to perfection by the technical progress that has recently been made. We would add that in the invention of modern motifs this house has been inspired by the beautiful designs of Persia and Japan. Many of their services and decorative ceramic pieces illustrate the ideas which we have set forth above. We have therefore had to mention them particularly, and we shall elsewhere have occasion to return to the manufactures of Messrs. Utzschneider & Co., apropos of the kitchen, and particularly of the bathroom, where their remarkable decorative tiles are particularly appropriate, improving in a wonderful manner the effect of these rooms, the decoration of which is so difficult.

We would mention the grand depot of porcelains for the care and minuteness with which it is kept *en courant* with all the new styles in ceramics, not only of France but also of England, where the art is very independent and therefore original and full of personality.

We would also cite the imposing and always decorative models of Messrs. Haviland & Co., whose factories at Limoges and Auteuil are typical establishments of ceramic art.

(To be continued.)

A LONG NARROW parlor or hallway with a window at one end, can be largely shorn of its tunnel-like impression by erecting a woodwork screen at a distance of about eight or ten feet from the window, similar to that shown in the accompanying sketch. The screen has leaded lights on the top and sides, and there is no necessity for it coming up close to the ceiling, which will improve the ventilation. The drapery can be arranged as shown, and may be of a plain material of a color to match. If



the stained glass is too expensive "glacier" window decoration may be used instead, which will give similar effects. There ought to be two narrow seats, not shown in the sketch, between the window and the woodwork of the screen, which will transform this part of the room into a very cosy apartment. A few flowers in vases standing close to the window frame will complete the artistic effect of the recess.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER costs only \$4 per year.

ART NOTES.

BY M. F. HARMAN.

PERMISSION has been given to Mr. and Mrs. Stanford to have copies made of the historic paintings in Italy, Russia and Belgium, the work to be done by the Court painters, and each picture to cost \$5,000.

Four hundred thousand dollars is to be expended in this way for Stanford University, and every masterpiece is to be embraced. The size is to be that of the originals in every case, and even the frames are to be an exact imitation.

There has been a decided revival of miniature painting, and Mr. W. Wallace Scott has just finished a miniature on ivory of Mrs. Pierre Lorillard, which is highly commended for its exquisite finish and coloring. Mr. Scott was a fellow student of Tenniel at the Royal Academy in London.

Mr. John Armstrong Chanler, the founder of the Paris Prize Fund, first became interested in the project through the help he rendered a fellow countryman in Paris some years ago. He was a student of international law at the time, and the young painter whom he met in the Latin quarter was quite without funds, and on the eve of giving up his studies. Mr. Chanler not only helped him at the time, but guaranteed him a five years' annuity. Mr. Chanler has raised in New York and Boston a fund sufficient to keep a young artist in Paris five years.

Amélie Rives, who is the wife of Mr. Chanler, is to continue her art studies in the autumn at her old home in Castle Hill, Virginia, under the tuition of Mr. Lasar, at whose school in Paris she has been a pupil during her residence in France.

Nearly 10,000 of the drawings of George Cruikshank were left to the British Museum by the will of his widow, who has lately died.

The fine Japanese art collection in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is the outcome of the energy of Mr. Morse and Mr. Fenelosa. The latter has just returned from a long residence in Japan, where he made the collection of which he has now the special care. It is said that he taught the Japanese nation to know and value the history of their own art in the school which he established at Tokio.

A new invention which is described by a California paper for decorating glass and porcelain has recently been patented in that State. A sheet of glass or porcelain is covered with an emulsion, and after being subjected to a dry heat is placed over a photograph, engraving or any kind of drawing. The glass, after being sensitized, is exposed for three minutes in a strong sunlight. After this it is developed with ceramic powders of any color desired. The dry powder is sifted evenly, the right color in the right place, and brushed over with a soft brush. Gradually the images develop green foliage, brown trunks and branches, true to nature. When the image is thus developed a thin coating of flux is applied, the plate is fired, and the picture is permanent.

A LITTLE CAREFUL study will enable any woman to tell the really good from the inferior china. The bargain counters in the china departments of the dry goods stores offer very little that would not be dear at any price. Yet to the uninitiated, the plates for nineteen cents compare very favorably with those that cost \$1 or \$2 each. One can never know too much, and knowledge of this kind is worth acquiring. Every housekeeper takes great pride in having her china closet well filled, and with careful expenditure \$100 or \$200 will give her a good stock.

THE SALES in French china probably exceed all others. The Limoges ware compares very favorably with the more expensive kinds. Handsome fish sets of it with heavy burnished gold borders are from \$9 to \$40, a really beautiful set of sixteen pieces costing \$15. Game sets in this ware are from \$10 to \$90, and large dinner plates from \$15 to \$20 a dozen. Dessert plates in various colors, from \$1 to \$2 each, are very desirable. Chocolate cups and saucers, cream tinted and decorated, in raised gold, are \$18 a dozen. This china has a very smooth surface and looks almost like glass. A set of German china in white and gold, containing one hundred and thirty-six pieces, is marked \$125.